

matter. There is much more here than an amendment formula. We must get to the bottom of the matter and not delude ourselves. People should know that Quebec, the home of French Canadians, has always believed for the last 20 years or so that the insertion in the constitution of an amendment formula could make Quebec's political evolution totally dependent upon the will of a few provinces, and that before any agreement as to an acceptable sharing of powers between Ottawa and Quebec. Always fearful of a possible constitutional iron collar, Quebec up to now, thought it was more realistic to demand an agreement on redistribution of jurisdictions, so as to know first the content of Canada's new constitution, even if it meant having to study afterwards an amendment formula, but we should not proceed in the opposite way.

If Mr. Bourassa did not make it as clear in Victoria in June 1970, he nevertheless, like all his predecessors, colleagues and advisers, had in mind the support and continuation of that stand of Quebec on that matter. And, as a deeper analysis reveals, the matter is not and does not look as simple as the Prime Minister gave it to understand last October 2nd.

Acting as the leader of this House and of the government means that the Prime Minister must be daring and courageous, and may I say honest enough to speak up his mind thoroughly, to present this House with every aspect of the problem, to dare and deal with every serious hypothesis. That means raising again every constitutional matter, which the provinces as a whole, and especially Quebec, are not in a position to indulge in on many accounts. The head of the government should give federal-provincial relations a better image than is conveyed by the kind of relationship now prevailing between the Minister of Communications (Mr. Pelletier), for instance, and his Quebec counterpart or the long delay in dealing with pertinent problems in the west of the country on matters of transportation and establishment of secondary industries. By the way, the estrangement of the western part of this country by the present federal government is a most serious matter which has to be thoroughly gone into.

National unity, Madam Speaker, implies setting priorities, and can only be built by answering daily problems; "structuring" will follow, and "procedurizing" will come next. As for bilingualism, one is left wondering when the Prime Minister is speaking the truth. We do not know anymore. When is his policy on bilingualism a true one? Is it when he or his representatives set forth attenuating principles as they did during the first session of the last Parliament, or else today when it has a majority? Would he have lucidly and rationally reduced the rate of application of the "operation bilingualism" in the civil service following arguments but by insiders or else by Members of Parliament on both sides of this House, or did he resign himself to accepting the challenge, for electoral purposes, knowing full well that during an election campaign he could review his position? Is that what you call leadership, Madam Speaker?

I, for one, had accepted the nine points announced as attenuating principles in a spirit of justice towards the English-speaking people already working in the federal civil service, and also to avoid, in undue haste, questioning the ultimate objective of "operation bilingualism" in the

The Address—Mr. Wagner

federal civil service. I feel particularly at ease especially since I am a member of a party that has supported in the past and still supports the official languages policy, since I am serving under the authority of a leader whose tremendous efforts are not sufficiently recognized, the efforts he has made to familiarize himself with the French language and the Quebecois fact. I am all the more at ease because I sit with remarkable men, like the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) whose merits are not sufficiently recognized in Quebec, whose contribution to this country where the two founding groups of the Canadian community—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but the time allowed him has now expired. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) has the floor.

Mr. Wagner: As my hon. colleagues suggest, perhaps I could be allowed to finish my remarks: I have very little else to add.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Do all hon. members agree that the hon. member should be allowed to finish his remarks?

An hon. Member: Two minutes.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Wagner: I thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank my colleagues on both sides of the House.

Having touched upon some of the points on which the Prime Minister dwelled, here is how it seems to me we should deal in depth with today's problems.

Bilingualism should not become a question of partisan politics. It seems that, in the province of Quebec especially, the minorities are dealt with equitably and that we are justified in expecting as much in the other provinces. That is all very well, and particularly on the occasion of the adoption of the renowned Bill 22, it was timely to recall that, during the last electoral campaign, in some regards the Prime Minister seemed to be of two minds.

When he was chosen candidate in the riding of Mount Royal, I remember that he said, and I quote:

[*English*]

I trust—I trust the Bourassa government—because they are liberals, they will do the right thing. You can trust us to talk to them to make sure they're doing the right thing.

[*Translation*]

Those are words at which I applauded wholeheartedly. Now the campaign is over; it changes men surprisingly. Today the Prime Minister says: Concerning Bill-22, if any citizen wishes to bring it before a court, he is welcome to try, but we shall not intervene.

Madam Speaker, I should like to make a last point. I think that the whole issue of leadership that was obviously the stake of the campaign leads me to the following conclusion. A few years ago, I had the opportunity, at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, to hear the Prime Minister ending his peroration with those memorable words: *Finies les folies!* And let us look at the behaviour of this government since the last election, during the last 90 days. When